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# LETTER

*Carry down*

*K*

THESE

**The Rev. Mr. HALL,**

Author of **An impartial Survey of the Controversy**  
about the religious Clause of some **Burgess-oaths.**

*Si Pergama dextra*  
*Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.*

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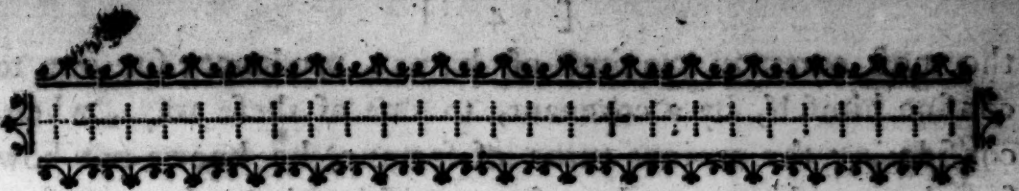
ADVERTISEMENT.

**H**AD it not been for the passions of admiration and friendship, the world would never have seen the following letter. A violent admiration of Mr. H——'s performance gave it life; and the desire of a friend occasioned its birth.

The writer, it is hoped, will not be suspected of flattery, than which nothing is farther from his intention. He only endeavours to give Mr. H——, in kind and degree, the praise he deserves.

As for method, it may easily be dispensed with in a familiar epistle. The writer set down his thoughts as they rose spontaneously in the perusal of the survey.

In fine, Corydon publishes this scribble for the use chiefly, and the amusement of the neighbouring swains.



A

# L E T T E R

T O

The Reverend Mr. HALL.

S I R,

✱✱✱ S OME time ago your book, entitled, *An impartial Survey of the Controversy about the religious Clause of some Burgeſs-Oaths*, came to my hand. So promiſing a title made me eager to peruſe the contents. I read it, and aſſure you, Sir, the martial boldneſs of your ſtyle made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion on my fancy, that I ſeemed to ſee Goliath waving his bulky ſpear, and with a tremendous roar, deſying the whole trembling Iſraelitiſh army.

A conſiderable time I have waited to ſee ſome intrepid hero, ſome David take the field and accept your challenge; but as yet I have waited in vain, no champion appears, and ſtill you continue in ſolitary triumph.

You open the ſcene with a furious invective againſt covenanters.

Deſtitute of charity in the ſenſe in which it is uſually taken in *this enlightened age*; they will not believe you and your brethren, declaring in the plaineſt terms, that covenanting is not proper at the preſent time, *when the church is in ſuch a divided ſtate*, and there is ſuch a variety of very ſafe ways to heaven: it is by no means proper, or conſiſtent with



the most common maxims of human prudence, for one to confine himself, by a covenant, to one of these ways, when, considering the various turns of fortune, he knows not how soon he may have occasion, from considerations of convenience or interest, to take another in which with equal success, he may run the Christian race, and as soon obtain the glorious prize.

*A time, you say, perhaps too rashly, in which the members of the church are in great danger of falling from their own steadfastness, is a proper season for covenanting.* Should some impertinent be bold enough to ask, if the present be not such a time, you may answer him by a simple negation; and you will have the advantage which, according to a certain logical rule, attends this way of replying to a question, of not being obliged to add a reason.

You proceed to prove, in your irresistible way, that when the above-mentioned duty is gone about, *a new covenant ought always to be made and taken*, and no regard paid to the old one. Yet common sense would lead some people (but to be sure, a man of your genius will scorn to take notice of such superficial minds as are led by so vulgar a thing) to think that, as the engagements entered into by any society in one period are binding upon it in every future period of its existence, so it is very proper at times to recognise, that is, renew these engagements.

What a great pity is it you have not pursued the thought a little farther. If you had, it would have furnished you with a more cogent argument against the practice of covenanting at the present time, than all the various ones that your party have advanced against it, collected in one. For, as you have shewn that *renewing* a covenant is at no time a duty; as when a society enters into a covenant materially the same with what it had entered into before, it only renews its former engagement, it does not make a new covenant; and as our ancestors engaged in their covenant, to all that piety toward God, to all that justice and charity toward man, which



the sacred scriptures (to which, you know, as good protestants, we are obliged to confine ourselves in religious matters), require of us as our duty; on all these considerations it is quite plain, that, ere we can make a *new* covenant, that is, one not materially the same with that of our fathers, we must procure a set of new commandments from heaven, of equal authority with those in the bible, which, giving yourself all your usual high airs, you might have defied the Antiburghers to produce.

But, alas, how short-sighted at times is the greatest human wisdom! Instead of making a proper improvement of this advantage over your adversaries, you weakly own in a note, that a society may enter into a covenant materially the same with what it had entered into before. Indeed there are several things in this note †, which indicate that the strongest genius cannot always maintain an equal flight. But *non ego offendar paucis maculis*; so many beauties as shine in your performance may

† The scope of it is to disprove what no one, as far as I know, ever asserted, namely, That the covenant of our ancestors ought to be repeated, and sworn word for word. Besides, it is inconsiderately dropt, that the covenants of the apostolic churches were binding upon our ancestors as much and in the same way as theirs is upon us. So far is this from being fact, that our ancestors had no more to do with the covenants of the apostolic churches, *as covenants*, than with those of the antediluvians. The obligation of divinely approved example is the same as that of a divine command, but very different from that of a covenant. I need say no more to a man of your penetration: Only as it is usual to impute the faults we meet with in the noble writers of antiquity to blundering transcribers, or half-learned presumptuous critics, so I imagine some blockhead about the printing-office has had a hand in this note; first, Because it is unworthy of such a father as you; and, secondly, Because the text is perspicuous enough, and really does better without it, and a great genius says nothing in vain.

If this annotation were not already too long, I would hint, that, in your next publication, you should roundly assert, that covenants ought never to be renewed, and that the only time for covenanting is, when a set of people agree to form themselves into a society, or when a society, having undergone a kind of dissolution, establishes itself upon a new basis. A genius, like you, can easily reconcile this hypothesis to all the examples of covenanting in the old testament. As for these in the new, it is plain it answers them already.

well atone for a few small blemishes, or even some considerable ones.

While I am writing, in comes an old man, and tells me he had been reading your preface. The following observation, (which I admire for its boldness), *That many who take the bond for renewing the covenants among the Antiburghers, swear what they do not understand*, is in his opinion groundless and not to the purpose: Not to the purpose, "Because," says he, "It is a reflection upon the way in which covenanting is at present conducted among the Antiburghers, and not an argument against present covenanting itself, which the author seems to aim at; and he might as well argue against the present administration of the Lord's supper, because many participants, he might suppose, among the Antiburghers, do not understand the nature, use and ends of that sacrament." "Groundless," continues he, "for, as the language of the bond is very plain and determinate; as I cannot, in charity, believe any one will offer himself, or be admitted by any minister to swear it, without having maturely considered its meaning and design, I cannot say ever I met with one covenanter who was at a loss to understand it, and I have some reason to think [*I fancy he dreamed it*]" "Mr. Hall never examined one of them." But Senex is one of these *superficial minds*, who, insensible to the charms of your eloquence, regard nothing but common sense and common reason. So I think the best and *easiest* way is to take no notice of so insipid a mortal.

When I am upon mistakes, I cannot forbear mentioning a very remarkable one of your friend in the court try, who, doubtless, displays wonderful acuteness and ingenuity, in the pungent queries which he puts to the Antiburgher ministers and people. He insinuates that these covenanters *are great boasters*. The reverse, I can assure him, is fact, for they are the most pitiful spiritless creatures alive. Hence never one of them makes any figure in the world; and they are the most dull unanimated writers that ever handled a pen. To be fa-



tified of this, let any man of taste, if he has a stock of patience sufficient for it, read Muckarsie's writings, which you, Reverend Sir, treat with the contempt they deserve, or even that mean-spirited acknowledgment of sins prefixed to the bond for renewing the covenants. Beyond measure extolling humility and self-denial, for which great geniuses are never remarkable, their constant aim is to extinguish the noblest passion of the human breast, the love of fame.

I will now proceed to touch a little on that noble effort of inventive genius, your comment on the following religious clause of some Burgeſs-oaths, "I profeſs and allow with my heart the religion preſently profeſſed within this realm, and authorized by the laws thereof."

A ſtranger to the arts of diſputation, ſimple enough to liſten to the native dictates of common ſenſe, would, on hearing a perſon take this oath in Scotland, be fully ſatisfied that he is a member of the eſtabliſhed church of that nation. Inform him that the Juror is in a ſtate of ſeceſſion from that church, and I am apprehenſive it would require all your rhetorical flouriſhes, and all your metaphyſical refinements to prevent him from exclaiming with amazement and horror, Deſtroyed wretch!

Diſregarding, however, *ſuperficial minds*, you enter deep into the oath, and come at its hidden meaning. Your party have made the important diſcovery, that the ſwearer of the above-mentioned clause does not engage to allow with his heart the *true* religion authorized by the laws of the land *with all its circumſtances about it*: No, but *ſcript of many of them* \*, in the purity of the revolution ſettlement; and if he cannot embrace

\* There is ſomething very deep in this explanation of the religious clause, which no one ever came at but a Burgher. A perſon of an ordinary underſtanding would be apt to think that the religion meant in the oath is the religion preſently authorized by the laws of the land; and not that which was authorized by them eighty years ago. *Sed quid non ſentit amor lucri?*

N. B. *Settling* a religion is quite diſtinct from *authoriſing* it: The one is the tranſient act of putting it in a fixed ſtate, the other the *continued* protection and encouragement of it by the legiſlative power.



even the religion of that settlement without farther dismantling; he may, you and the other casuists of your party assure him, take from it *such circumstances as are disagreeable to him*, with a conscience pure and untainted as the driven snow.

For the administrator, if he do not understand it in your sense, you maintain he is *a fool*, and consequently unworthy the least notice.

This, Sir, is really a bold stroke, and, were you to apply it to others as well as the administrator, which you might do with *equal* justice, would afford an easy and decisive answer to all the objections which can possibly be raised to your explanation of the religious clause; for if every one who does not see the justness of it be a *non compos mentis*, or an idiot, it is quite needless for any one, and far less for a man of your sublime sense, to take notice of the vagaries of a deranged imagination.

To conclude, you have marshalled, with such admirable dexterity; your secondlies, and thirdlies, etc. which are often increased to the confounding number of half a score; the strong words and phrases, that fortify every page, are so conspicuous in capitals; the arguments are all such resistless demonstrations, and set off with such triumphant exclamations; your whole performance, in short, makes an appearance so formidable, that it is a thousand to one, if any Antiburgher arise for half a century venturous enough to attempt giving it an answer.

To avoid prolixity, an unpardonable fault in a letter, I must be silent of a great many beauties in your work, which charmed me in the perusal; but to give a full enumeration of its excellencies would be too arduous a task for one that approaches much nearer to the sublimity of *your own* genius, than,

Your humble servant,

C O R Y D O N.



A

# CONVERSATION

BETWEEN

Will. Smith, G. T. and A. Hall.

Sm. **S**AY, my friend, how matters go,  
 You've struck, I hope, the fatal blow,  
 At first Muckarlie down I threw;  
 But, ah! he rose, and fought anew.  
 Surpris'd at what he ne'er before  
 Display'd, my courage was no more,  
 I felt my useless weapons fall,  
 A death-like paleness seiz'd me all.  
 Lost, thus, in terror and in shame,  
 To me your wish'd assistance came,  
 Call'd back my spirits, cheer'd my heart,  
 And vigour gave to every part.  
 I saw, I saw your wondrous hand  
 Defeat the Antiburgher band;  
 Defeat the whole: not only my poor foe,  
 Ev'n G—b and M——n did feel the blow.

Hall. Ha! Smith, you ha'n't th' *uncommon* art  
 To act so delicate a part.

B

Well vers'd in Aristotle's rules,  
 Speechless you might have struck *these fools*;  
 Have so divided and defin'd,  
 As to confound each vulgar mind,  
 † And prov'd that *in* and *out*'s the same,  
 And so have gain'd the height of fame.  
 But I—— it is not too high praise——  
 Can twist a word a thousand ways;  
 Can snatch, I hope, without offence,  
 A meaning 'bove the reach of *sense*;  
 Can without *reason*'s aid debate,  
 Nay, prove a point in *reason*'s spite.  
*Reason* and *common sense* are things,  
 Which *genius* while its flight it wings,  
 Regards not; which but suit the mind  
 That ne'er can reach *my* wit refin'd.  
 Surprising turns and daring threats  
 Portending still more dreadful feats,  
 Satire with dagger hid and smile,  
 And often Billingsgate fine style  
 Adorn my work, my spirit shew,  
 And silence each audacious foe.

Sm. Copp'ras and galls shall cease to make our *ink*,  
 The precious liquid *types* shall cease to drink,  
 The *press* to go, *books* to be made shall cease;  
 But *thy* great name and praise shall still increase.

† Alluding to the defence of Seceders swearing the burghess-oath.



It is said that lately a great p——, having assembled his peers, delivered himself to them in the following manner.

**I** Congratulate you, my Lords, upon the success of our late schemes for the ruin of m—nk—d. I feel the most sensible pleasure at seeing these who were once the favourites of h——n's king, in spite of his partial kindness, so far alienated from him as to vie with ourselves in contempt of his laws, and even to surpass us in trampling on his proffered love.

Improved by the experience of more than five thousand years, I know all the various and most successful methods of working on the human heart. The effects of the measures I have taken to make men indifferent to r——n, to dispose them to treat it as a farce, or at best, as a subject upon which to display their talents for disputation, may convince you of the soundness of my politics. The fashionable part of the world have already entered so entirely into my scheme, as to number a disregard of religious sentiment among the virtues, and to honour it with the name of moderation.

Some time ago, a sect arose in Scotland, who proposed, feeble and inconsiderable as they were, to revive the ancient warmth of religious zeal: you well remember the apprehensions I expressed on that occasion. Their efforts were far from contemptible; for what they wanted in rank and numbers they supplied in religious knowledge and active zeal. I spent three days, as much time as I could spare from the multiplicity of affairs that require my attention; three days I spent, and the intermediate nights in deep thought, concerting a plan of operations, which, in the event, has answered my most sanguine hopes. Fast was the enthusiastic party increasing and gathering strength, when my truly inf——l scheme for dividing and setting them at variance took effect, put a stop to their progress, and changed the universal esteem with which they were at-

tended into universal ridicule, hatred and contempt. How wonderfully pleased was this whole court to see men famed for piety and their services to the king of h——n, pleading the cause of perjury, and pleading it with an ardour which you yourself, M———h, could not exceed. Their interested defence which you, M———n, had the merit of contributing a good deal to carry on; their interested, I say, and violent defence of a B———s-o——h has led them to give up some of their sanctified principles, which had hindered my schemes from taking with that rigidly bigotted sect equally as with the rest of mankind. In a short time, my Lords, I hope to see the advocates for the B———s-o——h celebrating, under the specious names of moderation and mutual forbearance, looseness of principle and a cold indifference to religion.

In order to shew you that my expectations are not ill-founded, (for I am by no means a novice in political reasoning) I will point you to some of the excellencies of a new publication of a b———r m———r which awaken all my ancient ambition, and the praises of which you should teach the rocks and caverns of h—— incessantly to resound.

This author writes in such a declamatory style, and perplexed method as have the most native tendency to throw a mist on the understanding, to prevent it from taking an unprejudiced view of the matter in controversy, and to lead it into the endless mazes of error and mistake. He declaims vehemently against covenanting; and you are sensible, my Lords, how prejudicial that practice is to our interest, as it reminds people, in such a solemn and striking manner, of their obligations to the king of h———n, which it is our constant aim to make them forget. He pleads for mutual forbearance in matters known and acknowledged to be sinful; a principle teeming with advantages to our k——gd——m. In fine, not to mention his misrepresentation of facts tending to asperse the reputation of his opponents; though, I must own, I am highly delighted to see myself imitated in that part of my character by which I have acquired the title of *ὁ κατηγορὸς τῶν ἀδελφῶν*, and

to see one of these holy preachers employ his talents in the propagation of f—h—d, the grand, the unfailing support of our empire; to say nothing at all of his haughty confidence in his own abilities, though I regard pride as my own most genuine picture, and observe with the utmost uneasiness in any of the sons of men, the spiritless virtues, so pleasing to the king of h——n, humility and diffidence; not to take the least notice of his oblique hints against the conduct of the old c——rs, who did and suffered so much to advance the interests of religion, and so often ruined our best-concerted schemes; to pass over all these things and several others which give me pleasure in profound silence, consider, with exulting joy, how plausibly he proves, that one may, *with a conscience guiltless and unstained*, swear an oath of general adherence to any church, while he secretly intends an adherence to that church in some particulars only, which in his mind he must carefully distinguish from others in respect of which he disowns her. This, my noble associates, is the same mental reservation, which, in the hands of the Jesuits, contributed so much to raise my glory and increase my power. When this gentleman, who, for the services he has already done, deserves a considerable premium, undertakes to write again on the same subject, I will dispatch some of our number, who excel in eloquence, to supply him with such new stores of sophistry, and such admirable turns of wit, as will amaze, confound, and totally defeat his adversaries.

I conclude, conjuring you to use all your address, to exert every effort to foment a divisive spirit among the professors of ch——ty. And at the same time, let it be your invariable aim to bring them to look upon religious divisions as of small consequence; and, having gained this point, you may easily persuade them, by suggesting proper thoughts, that the c——n r——n is all a fable, and controversies about it mere trials of skill. Remember *divide et impera* is the grand maxim of inf—l politics.



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A N

A D D R E S S

T O

The People in Communion with the  
B U R G H E R S.

JER. ii. 2. Thou shalt swear the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.

PHILIP. iii. 16. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

A. D. R. E. S.

TO

The People in Communion with the  
BURGHES.

Mr. H. A. T. on the Lord's Day, in unity in  
judgment and in righteousness.

Mr. H. A. T. on the Lord's Day, in unity in  
judgment and in righteousness.



## A Serious ADDRESS to the People in Communion with the BURGHERS.

**A**S the cause in which you, my dear brethren, are engaged, appears to me far from being the most glorifying to God, or the safest and most comfortable to yourselves, I beg leave to take this opportunity to address you with all the tenderness of christian friendship, earnestly desiring your serious attention, for a few moments, to the following considerations.

Seriously reflect that the taking of the burghs-oath, cannot be an indifferent thing *in itself*. Every oath is a solemn act of worship, and “a religious declaration, by which a person, “if he do not speak the truth sincerely and without any secret reserve, renounces his interest in the divine mercy, and “imprecates upon himself the divine vengeance.” \* Sure, so awful a declaration must either be a duty, or a flagrant crime.

And it cannot be indifferent *to you*. Every one of you, implicitly at least, approves the burghs-oath. You are members of a society of which the very foundation is an obstinate defence of that oath. † You are in full communion with those who justify and practise the swearing of it. Thus though you never, in so many words, approve of the oath, you are still, if it be unlawful, deeply involved not only in the guilt of justifying it, but in that of swearing it too.

That swearing the burghs-oath is inconsistent with a state of secession from the church of Scotland, and consequently unlawful to Seceders, is exceedingly plain from the obvious meaning of the words in which it is conceived.

\* Puffendorf. de officio hom, et civ. lib. i. cap 2.

† When a member of a society *secretly* commits a sin *contrary* to the laws of that society, it can by no means be justly charged either on the society, or on any of its other members. But reverse the medal, and suppose the sin is *publicly* committed, and allowance given to it by the established laws of the society, the guilt, then, which, in the former case, was confined to an individual, stains the whole society, and every member, 1 Cor. v. 6. 2 John v. 11. Rev. ii. 14, 15.

Can any one safely *profess and allow with his heart* the religion of a church with which he cannot hold communion?

Is the religion of Seceders *presently* authorised by the laws of the land? Alas! the laws in favour of their religion are no more. They were buried in the reign of Charles the Second, and are now consigned to oblivion.

Hold, exclaims one, the religion of Seceders was settled at the revolution, and the laws then made in its favour are still in force, and still authorise it.

Is it so? And how comes it to be a certain fact that their religion has no other living law in its favour than the religion of Independents or Quakers? Nay, even the act of toleration, under the shadow of which these sectaries dwell in safety, is of no avail to the Seceder †, whose testimony declares it sinful.

But, it is denied that the same religion as that of Seceders, was settled at the revolution.

Presbyterian church-government, for example, is an important part of the religion of Seceders; but was no part at all of the religion settled at the revolution: ¶ for in the act of settlement, that kind of government is considered as something distinct from the true protestant religion, and consequently no part of it.

† Were he called to an account for his religion, he might plead upon his right as a man and a good member of society to his *religious* as well as civil liberties; but he could not plead upon the law of toleration, which it is plain does not suit his case: for that law supposes that all who are to enjoy the benefit of it, are willing to accept of toleration in the sense it determines; a condition which he is so far from complying with; that he professes to testify against it, as one of the grounds of God's controversy with the land.

¶ The words of the act are, "The king and queen's majesties conceive it to be their duty to settle and secure in the kingdom the *true protestant religion*," according "to the word of God as it hath of a long time been professed within this land, *AS ALSO the government of Christ's church* within this nation, agreeable to the word "of God, and most conducive to the advancement of true piety and godliness, and "the establishing of peace and tranquillity within this realm." It may be observed, the civil power established the true protestant religion in all the three nations; but presbyterian church-government in one of them only. That power, then, must have considered them as quite distinct.



Again, that national covenanting, or swearing allegiance to our divine sovereign, in a social way, is the duty of Christians, is a principle that has a very distinguished place in the religion of Seceders; but had none at all in that settled at the revolution. In the act of settlement, the confession of faith, and presbyterian government are mentioned and ratified; but with regard to covenanting there is not a syllable. Besides, the church at the revolution, neither set about covenanting themselves, nor even approved, by any particular act of assembly, the covenanting of their fathers in the period between 1638 and 1650; a convincing proof that, whatever some particular members might do, the church in general did not look upon covenanting as a part of the true religion.

But, granting that the religion of Seceders *was* settled at the revolution, it does not follow, that it is the religion *presently* professed, and authorised by the laws of the land: for the innovations, which have been introduced, since the revolution-settlement, into the religion of the church of Scotland, are as much authorised by the laws of the land, as that settlement itself; patronage is as legal as presbytery.

To insist no farther on this point, consider what a ridiculous farce it is, for a magistrate solemnly to administer this oath, in precisely the same terms, to two persons, the one a member of the established church, who considers it as obliging him to continue in communion with that church, the other a Seceder, who considers it as binding him to maintain the true religion in a state of separation from the same church: consider how amazingly absurd it is to suppose that two such persons may take the burghers-oath, not only in different but in opposite senses, and yet both take it, as the nature and end of an oath require, in the sense of the administrator.

These considerations, if they do not convince, can hardly fail of bringing you to hesitate at least, as to the lawfulness of the burghers-oath, and remember (it is a dictate of inspiration) *he that sweareth and doubteth is damned* \*. Conscience, my friends,

\* Rom. xiv. 23.



is a delicate thing; if you tamper with it to make it give into your interested schemes, you must expect to meet, one day, with its severest reproaches.

But as facts usually strike more than the clearest reasoning, I shall now mention some of the direful effects of the attachment of your party to the burghs-oath.

Reflect on the mournful rupture. The seceding body was in the most flourishing situation. Warm with zeal for the interests of religion, they exhibited an example of christian love and christian virtue so fair, that it commanded the esteem and admiration even of their enemies. Their united and vigorous efforts were in a fair way to bring about a reformation both in morals and in religion.

But, alas, how soon did the blossoms which promised such divine fruit, wither and die away! In one fatal hour, their unity was destroyed, their mutual love gave place to a spirit of animosity, and their zeal degenerated into party-rancour. What was the hateful cause of all this? An inconsiderate attachment to the burghs-oath.

The Antiburghers could by no means *honourably* abandon the cause in which they were engaged: They could not, *in conscience*, give positive allowance even for a moment to a practice which they judged highly criminal.

But the case of your party was all the reverse. They never once pretended that it was sinful to forbear taking the burghs-oath. How *safely*, then, and easily might they have acquiesced in disallowing the practice, till the lawfulness of it should appear in a fairer light, and so have prevented the rupture with its various attendant evils?

A zealous adherence to a testimony for the covenanted reformation of our pious ancestors, was once the characteristick and the glory of Seceders. But your party have not only discovered a cold indifference to that testimony, but in some instances have opposed it. Say, some sensible, but disinterested spectator, what has been the occasion of this? What but an immoderate attachment to the burghs-oath?

This led your ministers to write in favour of the revolution-settlement, which the associate presbytery had condemned as defective and falling short of the reformation attained in the period between 1638 and 1650; and even to go the length of charging the seceding testimony which they had solemnly espoused, with various falsehoods and mistakes.

Your neglect, too, of the duty of covenanting is a native consequence of that attachment. The inconsistency between the seceding bond for renewing the covenants, and the burgess-oath was too glaring to be palliated. Your ministers, therefore, were obliged to give up either that bond, or their favourite object. How great a share interest and passion had in directing their choice the impartial world may judge.

Again, let us turn our attention a little to the state of religion among Seceders.

Let us take part in their social interviews. How little is their conversation seasoned with the reviving name of Jesus! Sometimes, indeed, they gratify their disputing humour in talking about some of the most circumstantial parts of religion; and venting their spleen against their neighbours; but seldom do they feel their hearts burn within them, while they recount the wonders of redeeming grace and dying love.

Let us visit their families. There it is pleasing to see the blooming beauty of the rising plants; but, alas! it is mournful to observe how much, as they grow, they still incline to the fashionable follies of the age; how strong their aversion is to the singularity of religion; and how little regard they discover to the religious testimony of their fathers. The parents themselves, deeply tainted with the indifferency of the times, and ambitious rather of being like other *honest people*, than of the character of zealous Seceders, or even of zealous Christians, are highly satisfied in having given their offspring such an education as may enable them to get money and figure in the world; an education of which religion is no essential part. At last it is time to turn out the youth, who has been so long learning his part, to push his fortune and *do what seemeth right*



*in his own eyes.* View him entering on the stage of active life, flushed with hopes, conscious of his powers, and incessantly ridiculing the whimsical preciseness of his bigotted parents. Thus, unless Providence interpose, the seceding testimony will die with the present generation.

May not all this be imputed, in a great measure, to the unreasonable and blind attachment of your party to the burghers-oath?

It is well known that before the rupture, occasioned, as has been shewn, by a violent passion for that oath; before that disastrous event, love, zeal, and courage for the cause of Christ formed the character, and governed the whole conduct of Seceders. It seemed to be their only care to transmit pure and undiminished to late posterity, the testimony for an *evangelical* and *covenanted* religion.

The rupture, and the various malignant consequences of it, have not only exposed that testimony to the ridicule of its enemies, but have weakened the hands, sunk the courage, and very much abated the affection of its friends.

Now, serious Christians, can you see the church of your divinely compassionate Saviour rent in pieces, the covenants of your pious fathers disregarded, the testimony for a covenanted reformation opposed, and even practical religion going to decay? Can you take a serious view of all this, and yet approve of an attachment to the burghers-oath, which has been in so great a degree the baneful cause of all?

P. S. No notice has been taken, in the above address, of that great object of the popular outcry, the excommunication. Though, if an invincible obstinacy added to perjury (for in that light the Antiburghers regarded the taking of the burghers-oath by Seceders;) if *these* were not sufficient grounds for the highest ecclesiastical censure, it is extremely hard to say what is a sufficient ground for it.

The phrase *delivered up to Satan* \*, is far from being so ter-

\* The words used in the greater excommunication. The difference between



rible in its import as it is generally imagined. It only signifies the being deprived of the preservation from the temptations of that enemy, which communion with the church of Christ, and the enjoyment of its privileges afford; and this deprivation is for the most benevolent purposes that can enter into the heart of man, *for the destruction of the flesh*, and the mortifying of pride, an inveterate part of *corrupted nature*, for the subduing of which the great apostle himself found the buffetings of Satan necessary, 2 Cor. xii. 7. &c. that the unregenerated, being duly humbled under a sense of his sin, may be brought into a state of salvation; and that the censured who is already in that happy state, may, by an open and undissembled repentance, evidence himself to have *the spirit* of those who shall be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

A christian friend, who has the welfare of religion, and of these to whom the above address is made, very much at heart, begs leave to take this opportunity of reminding them, that as social covenanting, whenever it has been practised according to the divine rule, has had the happiest effects; as it evidently tends to rouse people from a listless indifferency about religion, and to animate them to a zealous exertion of themselves for the honour of their divine Sovereign and Saviour, and therefore is highly requisite in this thoughtless age; on these accounts, he is certain that, by the neglect of so seasonable a duty, they deeply injure their own souls, and the cause of religion, and earnestly desires they would take the matter into serious consideration.

I cannot conclude without hinting that the absurd phenomenon of *dissenters turning burghers* is one of the most striking instances that has ever been given, of the caprice of

this and the less excommunication seems to be the following. The latter declares the offender *cast out* of the *visible church*: the former, in the case of obstinacy, declares *the consequence* of that ejection, namely, being deprived of the *distinguishing* preservation from Satan which the members of the *visible church* enjoy. or it pronounces the obstinate offender *externally* in the same state as an heathen man and a publican.

human nature. Why do these good people forsake the dissenting interest?

Not to espouse a testimony for a covenanted reformation, which the Burghers have, in various instances, opposed, and to which in general they pay so little regard that they admit to full communion with them, people who are absolute strangers to it:—Not that they may be taught what they call the essentials of christianity, which, doubtless, are purely preached by several dissenting ministers;—not, as the Burghers in Scotland might plead, to be delivered from patronage and violent intrusions, which have no place among dissenters;—but—to gratify a passion for novelty and change†. The truth is, they only take a fancy to hear the Burghers, and leave their own ministers, whose conduct, they are obliged to own, is inoffensive, and in whose doctrine they cannot point out one error. Ah! thoughtless creatures, you know not what a labyrinth of contradictions and inconsistencies you enter into, when you enroll yourselves with the seceding swearers of the burghers-oath.

N. B. Should some wise *guesser* make himself believe that one of the members of the associate synod has had a hand in this publication, he is desired to change his faith in this article, and believe that none of them saw it, till it came from the press.

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† These people are in mind of a character which the apostle describes with inimitable beauty. 4. Nothing can with more propriety express the subtle artifice of false teaching, than the *viewless* wind; or the influence thereof has on weak minds, than the effects which that agitation of the aerial fluid produces on *light* bodies.

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